PERCEPTION

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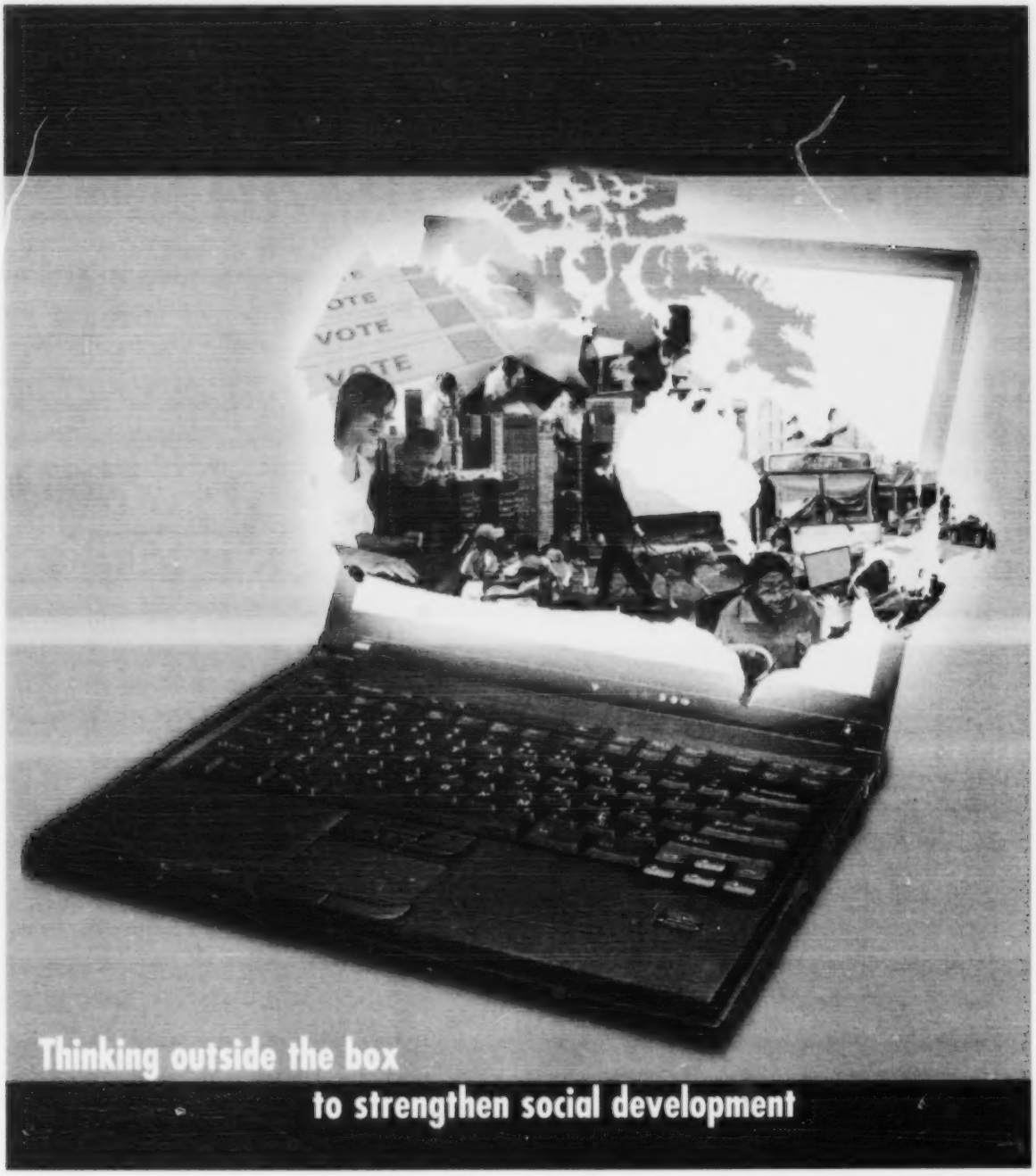

Thinking outside the box

to strengthen social development

PERCEPTION

Volume 29, No. 1 & 2, Fall 2007

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Editorial

New ways of working together

By Marcel Lauzière

Our economy may be thriving, but Canada faces some daunting social challenges.

Since the beginning of the decade, a strong economy has brought prosperity and delivered important social gains for Canada. From a strictly economic perspective, we are doing quite well. But many individuals and families in communities across the country have not benefited from these good times, and daunting social challenges persist.

It's time to step back and take stock.

As more than 330,000 Canadians working in the non-profit social sector know all too well, and thousands more working for social progress in all levels of government – there are no easy answers or quick solutions. They also know that in order to make real progress in addressing Canada's social challenges, sustainable investments and integrated strategies will be required. For no matter how hard they work, the current model has limitations.

We need to create new and better ways of working together.

What the CCSD proposes

The CCSD's goal is to play a stronger leadership role in supporting these new ways of working.

Four key questions will guide our work:

- *Where are we now?* We need a clearer picture of the current state of affairs by consistently measuring and monitoring social outcomes to determine whether we are making progress;
- *Why is this so?* We need to gain a better understanding of why we are facing these particular challenges;
- *And why does it matter?* It will be important to increase public knowledge and awareness about the implications of these challenges on Canada's economy, our health, and our quality of life;
- *Now what?* This highlights the need to share information, best practices and innovations, and the need to strengthen collaboration – between and across sectors – to identify effective approaches, policies and programs.

A two-pillared approach

To address these issues and build on the key drivers, the CCSD is charting an approach based on two strategic pillars that will reinforce each other: *The Canadian Social Development Report* and *The Canadian Social Development Forum*.

The Canadian Social Development Report, to be launched in fall of 2008, will measure and monitor social outcomes in Canada to identify rates of progress, critical policy issues, and share information and knowledge across the country.

The first part of the Social Report, and the most extensive, will consist of reports on each province and territory developed by organizations working on the ground in those regions. The second part of the report will provide a snapshot of how Canada as a nation is faring with regard to its social outcomes. This format will allow both the measurement and monitoring of outcomes over time, as well as comparisons with other OECD partners and competitors.

Successive biennial Reports will continue to provide a broad overview of social development in Canada, and each will focus on particular themes of importance to practitioners.

The Canadian Social Development Forum will be launched in the spring of 2009, and held in different parts of the country every two years. Information, data and analysis stemming from the Social Report will provide the context and evidence to support the discussions and debates at the Forum. The CCSD has many decades of experience energizing debates in a constructive and non-partisan way. At the Forum, we will bring together stakeholders from a wide variety of social development sectors, as well as seek to "broaden the tent."

Sharing innovation and best practice

While an important objective of the Forum will be to facilitate the sharing of new knowledge, new insights and new research findings, another key goal of the inaugural Forum will be to foster the sharing of best practice and innovation. This will be done concretely, through workshops and working sessions, so that participants can learn about what is working – and not working – in different parts of the country.

If, for example, a particular program or initiative is working well in New Brunswick or Québec, why shouldn't we find ways to share that experience with communities facing similar challenges in Manitoba or British Columbia? Or, if a promising policy direction is being explored in Newfoundland or Alberta, why wouldn't those learnings be shared with groups working in Ontario or Nova Scotia?

In Canada, the decentralization of powers under our federal-provincial-territorial system creates some real challenges that other, unitary nations such as the UK or New Zealand do not face. As a result, many Canadians are concerned by the lack of cohesive approaches to social issues, the patchwork of programs and services available, and the lack of equity across the country.

But while Canada's federal system creates some of these challenges, it also brings with it opportunities. There is a large diversity of experience across the country and across different jurisdictions that we can learn from and share in, but we have not sufficiently capitalized on those opportunities.

New technologies

The CCSD will use emerging technologies in social networking to build strength, facilitate momentum and help keep Forum participants and workers in communities talking and exchanging ideas.

New web tools and applications are appearing each month. From social networks like Facebook, to open source applications like Wikipedia and encrypted on-line banking services, the way Canadians use the web is changing – and we are using it more often. How can these participatory new web tools be used to support increased on-line collaboration, co-operation, knowledge sharing, and engagement? Can we use social networks for social change?

Expected outcomes

It would be naïve to think that solutions to all of Canada's social challenges will come out of this first Social Development Report and Forum. As noted earlier, there *are* no easy solutions or quick answers to these challenges.

That being said, however, there *is* growing recognition of the need to work together and to adapt integrated approaches that better link social and economic development. And there is a strong desire to share experiences, best practices and innovations with others across the country.

But it won't be easy.
It will require having the right resources, the right groups at the table and the right leadership in order to take what is an emerging trend and turn it into a sustainable way of doing business.

And hopefully, the development of a new collaborative process can become a catalyst for change and provide renewed momentum for social development in Canada.

Marcel Lauzière
CCSD President

Letters to the Editor:

Regarding the Canada Social Transfer

On behalf of the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB), I would like to thank you for this opportunity to provide input on the CCSD's work regarding the Canada Social Transfer (CST). As a member of the CCSD, we applaud your work and continuing efforts towards improving social policy in Canada.

DNSSAB provides human services in Nipissing District, Ontario, through the delivery of social assistance, housing, homelessness and subsidized childcare programs. Our extensive experience serving those in need, combined with our local community research, have made us very aware of social development issues – and of the gaps in services and resources.

The CCSD's letter to the Prime Minister (April 2007) outlined a four-point agenda for the Canada Social Transfer, including better accountability and transparency; increased CST funding; broad engagement with Canadians; and measuring and monitoring outcomes. It is very encouraging to see that the government has acted on the first two points, as noted in federal Finance Minister Flaherty's response to the CCSD.

The third point in the CCSD's proposal – *finding common principles through broad engagement with Canadians* – is an important step in advancing the CST agenda. Mr. Flaherty appears to agree and he indicated that federal ministers would be discussing with their provincial and territorial counterparts how best to use "new investments proposed in Budget 2007 for post-secondary education and childcare through the CST, as well as ongoing engagement on other social priorities."

We would like to emphasize the "broad engagement with Canadians" to ensure that there is representation from Ontario's Municipal Sector Service Managers in these discussions. This could be achieved through consultation with the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) which includes representation from both Southern and Northern Ontario. Ontario represents approximately 40% of Canada's population and accounts for half the nation's growth since 2001. As a result, the social needs of its marginalized population weigh proportionately heavy, and input from Ontario's service managers would be invaluable.

Additionally, needs within the province can vary significantly. The report, *Nipissing District: a Socioeconomic Profile & Report* (June 2006), provides an example of the socio-economic deficit that has occurred in Nipissing District, relative to the province, and we believe that other Northern areas are experiencing similar disparities. A Northern perspective at the discussion table will enhance the engagement process and increase its validity. As the CCSD pursues its agenda with the federal government, we would appreciate these considerations being kept in mind.

Regarding the CCSD's fourth point – *measuring and monitoring outcomes, sharing innovation and best practices* – DNSAAB also recognizes this as a priority area. We have been promoting this same initiative with the provincial government because a uniform measurement system across the province does not currently exist. As the CCSD pursues this issue at the national level, we recommend that such a measurement system extend beyond provincial and metropolitan-level outcomes. To date, there has been a focus on gathering and analyzing data for large metropolitan areas, while smaller communities are going unmeasured and unnoticed. Granted, over two-thirds of Canada's population currently lives in CMAs, but social and economic measurement is equally important for all areas of Canada. In the CCSD's continuing dialogue with the federal government regarding measuring and monitoring outcomes, we hope that the

geographical scope is extended to include smaller areas as well.

Based on the premise that "measurement can lead to improvement," a system that is standardized across the country and one that reaches down to lower levels of geography will go a long way towards achieving an efficient allocation of CST resources and maximizing our social investment.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input and in keeping us informed.

Bill White, CAO
District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board

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Dear CCSD,

I appreciate being kept in the loop regarding the CST.

It's good to read that Jim Flaherty mentions child care – and more than once! – but it's less clear how much of the CST is actually *for* child care. Is that the "$850M for children" that he mentions on page 2? It seems like such a small amount of money, given the wide gap between the demand for child care and the supply available.

I'm not as excited as Mr. Flaherty about the provinces having "flexibility to invest CST funds according to the needs and priorities." Too many provinces don't actually use that money for child care, which will certainly make it harder for the federal government to successfully help people over that "welfare wall." I hope the federal government closely monitors provincial spending – and reports back on it. It's a mistake to have to rely on "Canadians" to do the job, and for those of us working on the ground, it's almost impossible to figure out what funds came from where and how they were used.

One of the strengths of the former funding agreements [under the Canada Assistance Plan] was that the monies were not lumped in with anything else; they were clearly earmarked for child care, and we knew exactly how much our province was to receive each year. And you can bet that we watched every penny. Federally funding child care through the CST is not a better system.

If the federal government wants to get any credit for its role in supporting ECD, and do some damage control for terminating the funding agreements, it needs to find a way to showcase its contribution. Otherwise, the federal child care dollars are lost in the soup of the CST.

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Thank you for sharing the CCSD's important work on the Canada Social Transfer with so many organizations and interested individuals. Since the media do not like to report on funding mechanisms for social programs, the CCSD is an important source of information for many of us.

My group recently completed a research project involving low-income Aboriginal women in Vancouver, low-income immigrant and refugee women in Calgary, and low-income women with disabilities in Winnipeg. We wanted to add their input to the discussions taking place around the CST and to find out from them about the mishmash of policies affecting their lives.

The women talked about the effects of changes to social programs since the elimination of national standards, both on themselves and their kids. They discussed how federal and provincial policies that are supposed to help low-income people are not based on the realities of their lives, because no one consults with them. And they talked about specific hardships they had experienced as a direct result of misguided policies, such as the B.C. woman who did not qualify for social assistance because

Continued on page 11

Nova Scotia:

A nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to be poor here

By Katherine Reed

Nova Scotia is a wonderful place to live – as long as you have a fairly good income. Our province is a vacationer's paradise with scenic coastal villages, spectacular beaches, friendly and helpful people, and a vibrant cultural scene. Feel perfectly free to believe all the hype you see in our tourism ads – it's all true. Our universities are wonderful too, as is the architecture of buildings all over the province.

But most of these things are not accessible to poor people in the province.

And they can't expect much help from their government, either.

When it comes to dealing with its poorest citizens, our provincial government has the dubious distinction of being among the stingiest in Canada. There is precious little support for affordable housing here. We have some of the lowest welfare rates in the country and one of the lowest minimum wages (Nova Scotia places fourth behind Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador, and New Brunswick). If you are a low-waged parent with young children, good luck getting subsidized childcare. Even if you are one of the lucky ones, the childcare centres will have to levy surcharges of about $10 per day to make up the difference between their costs and the support they receive from the provincial government. And forget about a national child care program upon which many hopes were hung!

In Nova Scotia, tuition for post-secondary education is the highest in the country. Students must rely almost entirely on loans and personal resources to pay for their education. The province used to give bursaries of up to $1,700 per academic year to high-need students, but that was discontinued about 10 years ago – and tuition fees have doubled since then. In 2007, to fulfill an election campaign promise to reduce post-secondary tuition for Nova Scotian students, a one-time-only payment

was made of $440 for full-time students and just $220 for part-time students. But this money was not directed towards students with high financial need. In fact, it wasn't even given to the students, it was paid directly to the educational institutions. And the provincial government has made no commitment to continue providing this financial support, nor announced whether needs-based bursaries will ever be re-established.

Unemployment is chronically high all over the province, especially in rural areas and on Cape Breton Island – which accounts for most of the province. Only in the metropolitan area of Halifax-Dartmouth is the unemployment rate *almost* comparable to the rest of Canada.

There is no affordable system of public transportation in most parts of the province. If you live anywhere other than Halifax-Dartmouth or Sydney, you must own a car or rely on others who do; otherwise, you'd better live within walking distance of everywhere you need to go. No regular transportation allowance is given to welfare recipients. And as is the case throughout the world, the most conveniently located places to live are usually much more expensive than places located farther away from supports and services. And since precious little is being done to add to the stock of affordable housing in these more convenient, but higher-priced locales, renters without transportation are left in the lurch.

Solutions to Nova Scotia's chronic problems seem to have eluded our policy-makers and planners for decades. At public meetings on economic development for the province, you'll still hear people talking about how we need to manufacture "value-added" products here at home, rather than continuing to harvest our natural resources and ship them elsewhere for processing. This has been talked about for at least 30 years – and it's still being talked about. This repetitive posing of the same old problems and the same potential solutions is frustrating. You'd never know that Nova Scotia was home to the Antigonish Movement, a world-renown model of economic development based on adult education that organized people into co-operatives so that they would be the main beneficiaries of their work and their natural resources.

The idea of using a systematic, evidence-based approach to poverty reduction is very appealing, particularly after years of hearing misguided ideological analyses on the causes of poverty and ill-conceived, individualistic remedies flowing from that reasoning.

I don't know if others here feel the same way I do, but I'm awfully tired of the decades of hand-wringing and good intentions, while the plight of the poor in this province continues to deteriorate, mainly as a result of poor policy decisions and the lack of meaningful responses to poverty by both the federal and provincial governments.

But there may be hope of an end to this torment. After decades of ill-conceived, piecemeal, and inadequately supported programs to try to deal with different aspects of poverty, Nova Scotian policy-makers, political parties, and social justice activists are finally considering the idea of using an evidence-based, systematic approach to alleviating poverty – developing a poverty reduction strategy for Nova Scotia.

As many readers are aware, poverty reduction strategies have already been implemented in Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and in international jurisdictions such as Britain and Ireland. And national advocacy groups such as the National Anti-Poverty Organization and the National Council of Welfare have called for the development of such a strategy for Canada.

The idea of using a systematic, evidence-based approach to poverty reduction is very appealing, particularly after years of hearing misguided ideological analyses on the causes of poverty and ill-conceived, individualistic remedies flowing from that reasoning. Of course, it would be naïve to assume that some measure of ideological nonsense won't contaminate the plan as it goes forward, but at least there will be factual and logical discussions to combat the tired old stereotypes about "the generational cycle of welfare dependency" and such.

It is very encouraging that at least two community-based organizations have invited people from many areas of the province to identify and document their priorities for an inclusive and effective poverty reduction strategy. One group represents the concerns of women and they are committed to ensuring that the process takes women's particular needs and strengths into account. I believe this information is being shared with the provincial government. It is also encouraging that at the time of this writing, the NS Department of Community Services is seeking applicants for a six-month position to support a community engagement and information-gathering process in the development of a poverty reduction strategy for Nova Scotia.

In addition to community input, national leadership on this issue will also be needed. Given Nova Scotia's performance to date on welfare, education and affordable housing policy, I don't hold out much hope for a truly effective strategy being developed and implemented without strong federal leadership. And without significant economic

investment by the federal government, this "have-not" province will not be able to finance the venture on its own. Besides, isn't it high time that the several billion dollar surpluses that the federal government sits on, year after year – including about $50 billion from our EI premiums – gets used and invested in Canadians who desperately need it?

If the federal government would get involved in leading the effort to develop a national poverty reduction strategy, ideas and models from all over the country could be shared – from rural areas and small towns, to big cities, First Nations and Northern communities, visible minority groups, women's groups, and disAbility groups. Surely this would result in a more effective plan being developed. And it is similar to the approach used in Britain, where a nationally funded program recognizes that people in their localities are best equipped to understand their own issues and develop solutions to those problems.

One size definitely does not fit all. If solutions to our social development problems are to be truly effective, they must be developed from the ground up, not imposed from "on high." And since many jurisdictions would need to be involved in a national process – or in their own regional or provincial development processes – it would be useful for activists and researchers to share information as we go along. Perhaps the CCSD could facilitate this in some way.

Katherine Reed is an anti-poverty advocate who has both personal experience with poverty and has studied the subject for many years. She is a graduate of St. Francis Xavier University and has worked at the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre in Antigonish, Nova Scotia since 1988 in various roles supporting women living in poverty. She is the author of Fairness in Education for Single Parents in Nova Scotia, *which is available at www.policyalternatives.ca. She can be reached at reebing@gmail.com.*

Want to know more?

"The minimum wage in Nova Scotia has not been increased in real (inflation adjusted) terms in almost 25 years. It would take a minimum wage of more than $8.40 per hour to bring a single worker up to the poverty line in Halifax."

Time for a Real Raise: The Nova Scotia Minimum Wage, paper published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2005. www.policyalternatives.ca/documents/Nova_Scotia_Pubs/2005/time_for_a_real_raise.pdf

The Caledon Institute of Social Policy has published some excellent work on a new design for "adult benefits" in Canada. The model recognizes that adults may need different supports for reasons of short- or long-term unemployment, disability, age, or family circumstances. The model also recognizes the need for strategic investment in education and training to develop a workforce capable of meeting changing technologies and economic structures. See *Towards a New Architecture for Canada's Adult Benefits*, by Ken Battle, Michael Mendelson and Sherri Torjman, June 2006. www.caledoninst.org

In February 2007, Feminists for Just and Equitable Public Policy (www.femjepp.ca/) held a two-day session called "Moving Forward Women's Priorities for a Poverty Reduction Strategy." And in March 2007, the Community Advocates Network, Stepping Stone, and Dalhousie Legal Aid Service (www.law.dal.ca/Institutes/Dalhousie%20Legal%20Aid%20Service/) organized a one-day session on "Framing a Poverty Reduction Strategy for Nova Scotia." Both of these sessions looked to Newfoundland and Labrador's strategy as a starting point for one in Nova Scotia. There will be on-going work by these groups to further develop poverty reduction strategies and push for their implementation.

No quick cures

By Aggie Brockman

Statistics tell part of the social development story in the Northwest Territories. The rate of violent crime is seven times the Canadian average, and the NWT leads the country in property crimes.[1]

Women in the three northern territories (including Nunavut and Yukon) report spousal violence more often than women in the rest of Canada and they experience higher levels of sexual assault and homicide. The use of shelters here is higher than in the rest of the country.[2]

In 2004, there were 2,260 households in the NWT with inadequate, unaffordable or unsuitable housing in a jurisdiction of only 42,000 people.[3]

Another part of the story is the legacy of colonization and residential schools. At a Social Agenda Conference in 2001, one participant said, "it's okay to have pain and loss but we need to know how to deal with it…unresolved issues are overwhelming." The impacts of inter-generational abuses are evident in high rates of alcohol and drug use, sexually transmitted infections, injuries and suicides. The conference was supposed to set the stage for dealing with social issues in order to take advantage of resource development, but action on the conference outcomes has been disappointing.

This often bleak social snapshot is set in a region that has the fastest growing economy in Canada. The nation's first two diamond mines – with another opening soon – produce billions of dollars worth of gems. In Yellowknife, "Canada's Diamond Capital," there are growing numbers of gas-guzzling trucks, boats, all-terrain vehicles and snow machines. The mining jobs have benefited those who are willing and able to adjust to fly-in, fly-out rotational work arrangements. However, they have done nothing to alleviate the significant disparities in levels of education, employment and income between the capital city of Yellowknife and the small communities where local wage employment is scarce. Disparities within communities grow as well, between those able to engage in the workforce and those who lack the skills or other capacities to do so. Along with increases in income have come increases in the number of transient workers from elsewhere in Canada and overseas.

"As a result of the stresses of a booming economy, residential school abuse and associated social issues, the NWT has seen a rise in addiction issues, particularly in the areas of gambling, alcohol and cannabis/cocaine use. There has also been an associated increase in child welfare issues, post-traumatic stress disorder, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, domestic violence, sexual abuse and criminal offences."[4] The demands on social service agencies in Yellowknife have increased dramatically and a new $4 million transition house for homeless men is under construction.

There have always been tensions here between those who advocate for community development as a way for people to address their issues and take control of their future, and those who support industrial development and jobs as the way to solve our social problems.

The Government of the Northwest Territories and most Aboriginal governments are pushing for the $17 billion proposed Mackenzie Gas Project to proceed, focussing on economic development and the expansion of business interests as a priority. If the project goes ahead, the federal government has committed $500 million to address the social impacts and upheaval that usually accompany large-scale industrial resource development. (A few decades ago, Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk experienced just such upheavals during an earlier oil and gas boom in the Beaufort Sea-Mackenzie Delta area.) Unfortunately, however, there is little information available to determine whether these funds will be sufficient.

Community development is a slow, long-term process. It takes leadership. It requires political will. And it requires continuity and champions among the staff who control government purse strings, both of which are in short supply among the territorial and federal funding agencies. Community development also involves taking risks and giving control to local people, because the best solutions may be community-specific.

That's a hard sell in today's world of excessive accountability requirements and rigid outcomes in unrealistic timeframes.

Although community development may take more time and seem more labour-intensive, very positive results can be achieved. The Tlicho Community Services Agency is just one example of success that can come from using a long-term community development approach. The agency operates one of the top 10 Aboriginal schools in Canada – in Behchoko, 100 kilometres outside of Yellowknife – and it recently won a United Nations Public Service Award. The high school graduation rates meet or exceed those elsewhere in the NWT, and many students go on to post-secondary education. But the accolades and success have come about as a result of 30 years of focused and committed struggle.

Little of value comes easily or quickly, and that is true here. Improving the social development story in the Northwest Territories, its statistics, and the lives of its citizens will depend not on industrial development – although that may be part of the picture – but rather on a variety of culturally appropriate approaches that feature strong, consistent leadership and that build on the capacity of people within those communities over the long term.

Aggie Brockman is a social justice activist in Yellowknife.
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1 "Crime declines in the NWT," in *News/North*, August 13, 2007. p. 14.

2 Statistics Canada. *Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends*. October 2, 2006. www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/061002/d061002a.htm

3 Government of the NWT. *NWT Health Status Report 2005*. p. 64. www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca/pdf/reports/health_care_system/2005/english/nwt_health_status_report_2005.pdf

4 Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. www.ccsa.ca/CCSA/EN/Partnerships/Territories/NorthwestTerritories.htm

Letters to the Editor:

Continued from page 6

applicants there must have worked for pay in the previous two years. As a result, she was ineligible and had lived in a doghouse eating out of the garbage.

Under the now-repealed Canada Assistance Plan legislation, everyone in need was entitled to assistance.

The women discussed being too disabled to find or keep full-time paid work, but not being disabled enough to qualify for disability benefits. They shared painful stories about being mistreated by social service workers, and having their unpaid work go unrecognized. In Alberta, every woman on social assistance must find paid work by the time her child turns one – even though there is no affordable child care available. This could lead to the ridiculous situation of having the government take away low-income children because of inadequate child care arrangements, then paying foster families to raise them. Why not just provide adequate supports and services so that parents can raise their own children?

Unfortunately, our research project was funded through the Status of Women's Policy Research Fund, but that program was eliminated earlier this year, so our study will not be published or translated. In addition, the new terms and conditions for the federal Women's Program now prohibit research, advocacy and capacity-building – which is what we do. Since they were our major funder, we are laying off all staff, including me. Our executive director will continue on a part-time basis, with an even more part-time administrative assistant.

The CCSD faces an enormous challenge in making information available so that Canadians who are committed to social and economic justice can take action. Thank you for your work.

Marika Morris
Research Coordinator
Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW)
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What is the future we are creating NOW?

By Diana Smith

> "The real voyage of discovery lies not in seeing new landscapes but in having new eyes." *Marcel Proust*

There is something BIG going on in the world! There has been a huge shift in public awareness and attitudes related to climate change and the environment, and 'sustainability' has become a popular buzz word.

As we look at future trends, it is important that social developers, change agents and leaders grapple with the questions: How are we responding to and engaging in change? Are we ready? Are we adapting? Transforming?

Do we even know what sustainability means and what a sustainable future might look like? And what does the shift in global consciousness around the environment mean for the social agenda – in our communities? In Canada? Throughout the world? How are we connected? And where is the dialogue happening?

I've been involved in social issues and movements for many years as an activist, executive director, professor, consultant, community leader, parent, and citizen. To me, these are some of the key questions that seem relevant at this critical time in our human history. My intention is to raise some of these questions in the hopes of opening up the discussion, encouraging generative dialogue, and tapping into a deeper source of possibility for our future.

The ecological agenda and the social-economic agenda are not separate entities; they are really one. Yet discrete silos based on issues of poverty, homelessness, family breakdown, or liveable wages simply perpetuate the problem-based, let's fix it approach. What's wrong can be seen in many areas:

- linear and silo thinking in the political and public discourse;
- the "charity" and "service" mentality of many non-profits;
- a problem-solving approach, which limits creativity and innovation;
- a predominantly "mechanistic" mindset;
- the separation of environmental, social justice, and democracy organizations and movements; and,
- the involvement of only one group or layer of society.

Based on my experiences, I believe that by embracing a more holistic perspective, some of the underlying systemic issues and the tensions between different value systems can become focal points for transformational change. And recognizing the self-organizing, chaotic nature of change is fundamental to "seeing the world with new eyes." In this way, the essential connections between the natural and human environments become more apparent, and embracing an ecological perspective is an outgrowth.

In this context, I see many hopeful trends and developments. Civil society is starting to take on a new role that is grassroots-based, organic and fluid. There is growing recognition of the need for collaboration *across* boundaries. Many groups and coalitions are exploring distributed leadership models that honour and acknowledge the dispersed and complex issues the world faces. There is also increased

recognition of multiple intelligences, experiences and approaches that enable us to see whole systems – both human and natural – and their interdependence.

So how can we move forward to embrace this complexity, acknowledge our interdependence, and engage in dialogue? I suggest that we need to:

- Foster innovation and ingenuity;
- Create forums that provide spaces and places for dialogue across boundaries and shifts in mindsets;
- Move beyond the 20th century "social welfare" model;
- Create strong and relevant social and political institutions and forms of governance;
- Celebrate and engage diversity;
- Encourage adaptability;
- Acknowledge body, mind, heart and soul, and bring forward these elements to our discussions;
- Raise the profound questions and engage in conversation about them.

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What's next?

Some resources I'm finding valuable in exploring this territory include the following:

- Edwards, A.R. *The Sustainability Revolution: Portrait of a paradigm shift.* Gabriola, BC: New Society Publishers, 2005.
- Hawken, P. *Blessed Unrest: How the largest movement in the world came into being, and why no one saw it coming.* New York: Viking Press, 2007.
- Head, S. and R. Sennett. "The Culture of the New Capitalism," in *The New York Review of Books*, 54(13), 2007.
- Korten, D.C. *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006.
- Scharmer, C.O. *Theory U: Leading from the future as it emerges: The social technology of presencing.* Cambridge, Mass: Society for Organizational Learning, 2007.
- Sumner, J. "Learning Our Way In: Sustainable Learning and the Civil Commons," in *Convergence. Convergencia. Convergence*, 36(1), 21, 2003.
- Westley, F.; M.Q. Patton; and B. Zimmerman. *Getting to Maybe: How the world is changed.* Toronto: Random House Canada, 2006.
- Wheatley, M. J. *Finding our way: Leadership for an uncertain time.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2005.

And selected websites:

- Caledon Institute www.caledoninst.org
- Tamarack Institute www.tamarackcommunity.ca
- The Fourth Sector www.fourthsector.net
- Social Analysis Systems www.sas2.net
- Integral City www.integralcity.com
- Spiral Dynamics Integral www.spiraldynamics.net
- The Great Turning www.thegreatturning.net
- Gather The Women – Global Matrix www.gatherthewomen.org

Photo by Vincenzo Pietropaolo. Reprinted with permission.

Pictured from left to right: Nancy Baker, Cathy Crowe, Kevin Clarke, Dri, Kerre Briggs, Bonnie Briggs, Marty Lang, The Colonel, and Melvin Tipping, at the Homeless Memorial, Church of the Holy Trinity, 2006.

Street Nurses on the front lines of social development

Cathy Crowe is a street nurse and she is the current recipient of the Atkinson Economic Justice Award. She has been tending to Toronto's homeless population in shelters, parks, ravines, tent cities, streets and alleyways for the past 18 years.

I met her in May, when she was on a cross-Canada tour promoting her new book, *Dying for a Home: Homeless Activists Speak Out*. The event in Ottawa was co-sponsored by the Canadian Nurses' Association and the Alliance to End Homelessness.

Crowe comes across as a warm and soft-spoken person, as well as an articulate and committed social justice advocate who is not afraid to fight for what's right.

As a street nurse, her work involves providing front-line health care to homeless people. She treats a lot of injuries, infestations, infections, frostbite, hunger and chronic illness.

But it doesn't stop there. Her work also involves trying to end homelessness.

"Homelessness," she says, "is what is downwind of poverty."

As a nurse, she has been trained to treat not just the symptoms but also the root causes of problems. She considers prevention to be a critical part of her job. And she knows that preventing homelessness involves facing down its structural causes. The social and political conditions that make homelessness not only possible – but increasingly commonplace – demand her attention.

Crowe talks about "canaries in the mineshaft" – warning signs that there are serious problems sweeping across Canada.

"One of my first impressions as a street nurse in downtown Toronto was that there were an awful lot of people with rich Maritime accents at the corner of Sherbourne and Dundas. And boy, were they homesick!" says Crowe. "Like the canary in the mineshaft, these Maritimers were signalling a warning. When economic conditions in smaller communities are bad, there is always a forced migration to larger communities. So when plants close, when social and community supports are cut, when it becomes harder to qualify for employment insurance, when welfare rates are slashed, when the minimum wage stays the same but the cost of living keeps going up, and most of all, when housing and feeding yourself or your family becomes impossible – all roads lead out of town. But not necessarily to a better place. They usually lead to a big city."

As a result, fighting for fair social infrastructure and social development has become part of Cathy Crowe's life.

In addition to dressing wounds and treating frostbite, she spends much of her time going to meetings, participating in coroners' inquests, attending vigils for homeless people who have died, advocating for social change, writing, traveling, speaking, and trying to motivate the general public and politicians to do what is right and what is necessary.

"If politics is about the distribution of limited resources," she says, "I've learned that nothing is ever freely given. You have to fight for it."

Activism among nurses is nothing new. For many, it's a logical extension of their training – to provide some relief from suffering by alleviating the symptoms. But if the root cause of a problem isn't addressed, the relief is only temporary. Nurses have fought for and won many improvements in health and social conditions over the centuries. (For some historical examples, see Cathy Crowe's speech, "The Poor Will Always Be With Us? Not If nurses have a role!" at http://www.tdrc.net/resources/public/Crowe_Speech_june_16_06.htm)

When asked if it's difficult to juggle the hands-on, front-line health care with all the activism, advocacy and public education work she does, Cathy Crowe replies, "I was trained this way. It's natural for me to include activism as an integral part of my nursing. But just because it's natural doesn't mean it's always easy."

And it isn't easy. Her patients have a death rate that is eight to 10 times higher than that of same-aged people who live in homes. Homeless people must contend with multiple threats to their health, safety and well-being, including poverty, harassment, violence, illness, stress, disease, malnutrition and of course, the elements. Many have significant health challenges which are created or compounded by their homelessness. Crowe can treat the symptoms, but she deals with the constant frustration of structural problems that resist change.

It's not getting any easier. Crowe used to be able to make a call and get housing for someone in critical need on compassionate grounds. Now she can't even find housing for stroke victims or people with brain tumours. She's also seeing more homeless families with children. She's seeing more people with more problems. Whereas she used to treat scabies, lice, colds and pneumonia, she's now seeing more serious public health issues emerging among the homeless, such as HIV, hepatitis, emerging viruses, and tuberculosis.

Crowe is concerned that nothing has changed despite lessons learned from the SARS outbreak: there is still a forced migration of homeless people between shelters, still inadequate ventilation and overcrowding in the shelters. The worst, she fears, is yet to come – in the form of a pandemic.

"I consider the entire experience [homelessness] to be an assault on the immune system, and it certainly provides fertile ground for infectious and communicable diseases. If we allow third world conditions, we will see third world health problems."

The federal government needs to step back up to the plate and take responsibility for housing again, Crowe says. Since it abandoned that role in 1993 with the dismantling of the federal housing program, responsibility for housing has become increasingly fragmented and inconsistent across Canada. The end result is that a quarter of a million Canadian men, women and children no longer have anywhere to live. Meanwhile, a patchwork of charitable organizations tries to respond to a homelessness crisis that is unparalleled by anything since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

"The issue of charitable relief efforts in times of crisis has been controversial. Charity is certainly necessary in the immediate crisis, until the appropriate level of government can respond. But for 15 years? What we have witnessed in Canada is the government's prolonged reliance on volunteer groups to provide increasingly complicated types of aid, with no sign of proper funding for the social service sector, let alone housing relief."

She reflects on what happened during the Mike Harris years in Ontario, and the resulting burnout that was rampant among frontline workers in the social service sector.

"We were incapacitated by the attack on social services and weakened as our workers reacted with fatigue, depression, illness, and vicarious trauma in response to workloads they were expected to uphold and to the trauma they were in the midst of but expected to stay silent about."

Crowe doesn't stay silent anymore. She has a formula that guides her work: Witness + Honesty + Speaking Out = The right thing to do.

To avoid burnout, she celebrates the victories. She supports and nurtures activism among her clientele. Together with 10 homeless people she met on the streets of Toronto, she co-authored the book, *Dying for a Home*. Four of her co-authors have since died.

She chose these 10 people from among many possible candidates. Her criteria were that they be "upright." She says homeless people tend to be portrayed lying down, passed out, or sleeping, and many of them suffer visibly from what she calls "deprivation of the human spirit" – the effects of relentless trauma. Crowe wanted to show another side: people who were homeless but still functioning, contributing, and doing their part to make the world a better place.

Dri, one of Cathy's formerly homeless friends from Toronto's Tent City and a contributor to her book, is a political activist. He's on the steering committee for the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, and he speaks to high school and university students about homelessness, sharing his unique perspective on a subject he knows too well.

"If people saw animals kept in these conditions," says Dri, "they would be so upset."

There are roughly 16,000 registered nurses currently working in community health. Of those, about 100 to 150 are street nurses. They're on the front lines of poverty, providing emergency care to the casualties of Canada's inadequate housing policies. They're also on the front lines of social development, doing everything they can to eliminate the need for street nursing in Canada.

Susan Scruton is a webmaster at the Canadian Council on Social Development and an activist for social justice.

Dying for a Home: Homeless Activists Speak Out is published by Between the Lines. It can be ordered from http://www.btlbooks.com/.

Postscript: Another setback for social advocates

In September 2007, the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC) announced that it would be closing its operations.

The TDRC included people working in the areas of social policy, health care and housing, academics, business people, community health and social workers, AIDS and anti-poverty activists, people with homelessness experience, and members of faith communities. It provided advocacy on housing and homelessness issues and was active on numerous fronts, including providing coordination services for the National Housing and Homelessness Network, working on the City of Toronto's Advisory Committee for Homeless and Socially Isolated Persons, providing practical assistance and support to homeless people, researching the issues – including "tracking the numbers of those who die on our city streets" – and producing numerous reports on their findings. The Committee had declared homelessness in Canada to be "a national disaster" and sought a fully funded National Housing Program through the One Percent Solution.

In a letter sent to supporters, Cathy Crowe and Tanya Gulliver on behalf of the TDR Steering Committee said, "Not unlike many progressive, social justice organizations of our type, we face chronic challenges around funding. Despite fundraising efforts, we no longer have sufficient funds to operate in the manner we would like to. Reluctantly, we have let staff know that their contracts will end effective October 11 and the office at 6 Trinity Square will no longer be staffed after that date. TDRC has a history, life and energy that will continue and we will update you on future plans."

In November, Ms. Crowe sent an update: "Thanks to all of you for your messages of concern. We have received a number of donations from individuals ranging from $30 to $500 and from several unions and faith groups as well. Thank you. We hope to receive more substantial funding that will allow us to hire a campaign coordinator for our work, and in the meantime we are able to keep the office functioning with the help of TDRC Steering Committee members. If you have any leads, please send me a message at ccrowe@sherbourne.on.ca."

www.tdrc.net; tdrc@tdrc.net; Tel: 416-599-8372

Why Small Cities Matter

By Terry Kading and Christopher Walmsley

Photo by David Atkins

For the more than a century, small city images have been deeply embedded in the Canadian literary imagination. Stephen Leacock's portrayal of Ontario life in *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Clarence Gagnon's paintings of Quebec village life, W.O. Mitchell's stories of the Prairies, and television programs such as "North of 60" and "Little Mosque on the Prairie" have presented small cities as primarily peaceful and bucolic places where Canadians lead (sometimes) humorous lives under harsh conditions.

But is that picture accurate? Are small cities such idealized places, free from big city problems of crime, homelessness, addictions? Are they just big cities in miniature, where solutions can be imported and simply scaled-down? Or are small cities unique in identifiable and measurable ways?

Small cities are distinguished from big cities by more than just population. They have their own unique characteristics and social development challenges. And political parties, researchers and governments interested in "the urban agenda" should pay heed.

Technically, a small city can have a population of up to 100,000; it is not part of a metropolitan area, but has its own community identity and sensibility. In contrast to big cities, the small city is often confronted with deeper concerns over maintaining its economic and population growth. The era of the single industry town has been replaced by the needs of a more diverse population that is employed in everything from mining, forestry, and agriculture to call centres, transportation, construction, tourism, and professional services.

Small cities are also distinct from a social development perspective. The physical proximity of citizens creates a level of social proximity that makes social exclusion visible to all. In small cities, pan-handling, homelessness, the sex trade and addictions take place on Main Street or just a block away. Social distances between people are reduced, and the marginalized lives of some citizens become visible and concrete.

Many small cities have no history of formal municipal social services beyond minimal outreach efforts made possible by local activism – such as setting up a food bank, women's shelter, or collecting charitable donations. And as social problems today expand and multiply, local governments are often left in a quandary whether to assume greater responsibilities – and costs – to deal with these challenges, or to pressure federal and provincial levels of government to re-establish social supports and services.

An initial inventory of municipal services and local initiatives among small cities found considerable variations in how they attempt to address a variety of social problems. These range from targeted outreach efforts to more punitive measures and regulations in an effort to balance compassionate but long-term solutions with more immediate aesthetic and business concerns over the "city's image." This is particularly so, if attracting tourists and external investments are a concern. In Kamloops, for example, after the RCMP made arrests in a major crackdown on the sex trade, they enforced a "Red Zone" that prohibits a number of individuals from returning to certain areas of the city.

Continued on page 27

Using the Web
to help promote social change

In a *Briefing Notes* session organized by the CCSD, Jason Mogus, CEO of Communicopia, a Vancouver-based strategy and design firm, talked about how organizations can build meaningful relationships and find supporters using the Web.

"I was asked to speak today because of the work I've learned to do after more than a decade working in the trenches supporting social change organizations with the web, and about the little and big things I've learned along the way.

My firm Communicopia started in 1993 to help environmental organizations take advantage of new media tools. We built Greenpeace's first website and did a lot of work for Environment Canada, but most were small, innovative organizations and companies you've probably never heard of. We survived both the dot-com boom and the bust. And we build a lot of websites!

It was fun at the beginning – no one knew what this web was, how to have success with it, and for a while anyway, no one knew how to do it, so we got lots of work. But it was difficult to make a business work supporting social change. We've had to re-invent ourselves at least four times now. It hasn't been easy, but it has been richly rewarding, and I've learned much along the way.

First, I'd like to relay what I've learned about the social change sector through a daily practice of building, say 400 websites:

- Data isn't going to save the world. (And non-profits publish a LOT of data!)
- Many organizations don't know who their audiences are. They don't know what they want, what they think, or what they need.
- A lot of organizations are trying to do a lot of different things. Funding models force organizations to create or run programs that may not even fit into their functional capability, and provide no leverage or benefits to the whole organization. (No corporation would survive with half a dozen products, all different, and half of them flailing.)
- There usually aren't a lot of feedback loops that help us know whether anyone is using what we are providing or if we are having any impact.
- I've learned that the people working in non-profits are amazing, passionate, caring, visionary…but they are also often inefficient, are poorly trained or lack experience for their level of responsibility, and they have too many jobs to be able to do most of them well. They are busy, overworked, dramatically underpaid and under-recognized for their contributions, and under-supported with training and growth opportunities.

As a company, our work also suffered. We weren't investing in our own innovation or developing our staff; we were doing things the way we had always done them. And the end results weren't having the impact we had seen earlier.

This all came to the fore about two years ago. It felt like the world didn't need another website. Here I was, a supposed social innovator, committed to changing the world, but taking scarce money out of the social change sector and producing work that was only decent. And I wasn't sure it was even making an impact.

It was a dark time for me. I had to realign myself with my own personal mission, and look at potentially killing off my company

and my identity as a CEO and social change leader. It required a lot of inquiry, time, asking questions of everyone I knew, and asking for help. I let it all go.

And it came back! Just as Web 2.0 has re-invigorated the web sector, I've emerged re-energized and re-inspired, doing work in a new way. My practice is now mostly about strategy – helping organizations plan and own websites, tools, and campaigns that serve their mission, are sustainable, and have a chance of success.

To make an impact, people first have to be grounded. That's probably true of everything, but definitely so with the web. Are organizations clear on what they are? Their purpose, impact, and stories? Who do they serve? What do they do better than anyone else (and prove it)? How can they involve others – in meaningful ways – in their work and in breaking down traditional barriers? And how can they work within an ecosystem of other organizations to achieve success that serves the whole?

Everything grows from that solid core. If it isn't there, I can't get involved because then it's just another website.

So let's put this back into context. We live in a time of great change, great crisis, and great opportunity. We all feel these changes, yet surprisingly, the traditional leaders in our society don't talk about it much.

There are also massive forces restricting change, huge vested interests in keeping the status quo. We're not taught to be innovators. We're not shown how systems work together, only the separate parts.

First, the good news: social change has moved from the margins to the mainstream. Examples include Muhammad Yunus winning the Nobel Prize for his work with the Grameen Bank providing credit to the poor, companies like Nike using their powers for good, and magazines everywhere promoting environmentalism. There is a focus on social innovation as a legitimate activity, just like innovation is promoted in business and the tech sector.

There is so much new energy, new ideas, and new thinking going on! That's good, because change is an all-hands-on-deck thing, and let's face it, the way we've been handling change is *not working*:

- Social services have been "professionalized," so average people no longer see themselves as being responsible for their community's health and well-being. They want to make a difference but don't know how, and many organizations don't have ways of integrating people's energy and ideas.
- Funding models are broken, reactive, with a short-term focus and short-term support. Funders don't get true market feedback because no one tells them truth, so they're slow to adapt. Charity is great, but it's expensive to find money – writing proposals, demonstrating "results," too much money on evaluation, and building fundraising programs to make eight cents on the dollar.
- Citizens are over-marketed. There is too much choice for everything, from products to charities. People don't believe anymore and they don't listen because they're tired of being interrupted to hear the messages and tired of being "spun."
- Our sectors are too rigid in how we approach problems. No only are we *not* collaborating, there are turf wars and trying to win at the expense of others. Even though people are seeing the interconnections and the global nature of problems, few of us are responding with new models, new collaborations, and true cross-sectoral approaches.
- Many people in the social change sector are tired! They've been underpaid and under-loved for too long. There is a culture of critique and disempowerment. But no one wants to join the army of the glum, and when you're constantly talking about what's not working, the world tunes you out.
- We aren't creating enough new models and approaching problems in new ways. There isn't a culture of innovation, of risk-taking, and accepting failure.

So how can you be creative when you're burned out? And how can you address systems conditions when the vested interests are so entrenched?

It may look pretty bleak, but I think there is hope on the horizon. And because I'm a web guy, I'll start with how web tools – and web thinking – fit into my optimism.

Why care about "the new web?" Every organization I've worked with basically wanted some flavour of the same things:

- Reach more people;
- Engage them in new ways;
- Raise more funds;
- Have an impact on their mission.

In the case of the CCSD and other organizations here today, I gather you are looking to:

- Disseminate ideas and information better, and get them into the hands of those who can use them to produce better social outcomes;
- Collaborate and share knowledge with peers more effectively;
- Better understand the changing world around you and get feedback on how you're doing;
- Impact your social mission.

What I've learned is that web tools can help organizations – and the people inside and outside the agency – become more connected, collaborative, innovative, and ultimately, more effective.

Web 1.0 was about publishing. Web 2.0 is a conversation. And it is a way that the average person can be reconnected into the work of improving our world.

Here's a quick overview of Web 2.0 tools:

- Blogs: expressing and engaging
- Rich media: compelling storytelling
- Social networking / Facebook: building relationships and making connections
- Social bookmarks and Wikis: knowledge sharing and collaborating
- RSS feeds: staying connected
- On-line communities: tying it all together

There are some amazing stories of innovation and success using these new models and new ideas:

You need to change your CULTURE and your way of thinking to be successful in this new world.

- The U.N. Foundation's "Nothing But Nets" campaign has raised $14 million. It's a participative site, using storytelling, and has re-framed a whole issue.
- Nabuur has turned the international development paradigm on its head by putting information and impact in the hands of the people.
- Salvation Army, presenting real-time information and stories which make their work more engaging and accessible.

To be honest, I had trouble finding stories of on-line innovation and success in the social community. It may be that the stories are there but they're not being told.

But you can't get these results with web tools alone. I can't stress that enough.

You need to change your CULTURE and your way of thinking to be successful in this new world. And you can't do this alone.

So here's my take on "Web Thinking:"

- Collaboration: inside organizations, among different agencies, and across sectors;
- Transparency: being authentic, be real, be timely;
- Participation: engaging people – and not just "the usual suspects" – in meaningful ways in your work;
- Listening: being open, soliciting feedback, and being ready to hear what comes back.

If you don't do these things, you can have all the systems in the world but they won't be successful. In fact, what works well on the web is what works well in the living systems around us. The behaviours, techniques, and mindset behind the web is exactly the same mindset as with successful social change.

What can the social development sector and organizations like CCSD do? While I don't claim to know a lot about the sector, I have a great deal of admiration for the work you all do in keeping our social safety net in tact. What I can suggest is the following:

- Speak passionately about the things that matter to you. Give voice to those you serve. Tell your stories better, and if you can't, partner with people who can.
  - Balance data with the stories.
  - Get creative! Use podcasts, videos, flash movies. People pay attention to new things.
  - Tell stories about solutions and impacts, not just issues or your campaign.
- Get your research into the hands of social innovators. They're making change happen, but often don't have time to see the bigger picture.
- Create spaces for innovators to interact, network, and collaborate to exchange information. Connections create potential. Build social capital.
- Try new things, even radical ones. We need to embrace failure and learn. Be flexible, and be easy on yourself and others. Don't expect perfection.
- Kill off programs that are dying. This releases creative energy and resources that have been locked up.
- Support visionary, passionate people. Transformations tend to move through people who follow their calling.
- Move beyond your sector. Invite new people/ sectors/ organizations. Find a way to work with and integrate energy coming from the corporate sector, from youth. Invite people who don't necessarily agree with you. Their feedback can provide important information about how to make your programs more relevant to their worlds.
- Support new voices within your organization. Give them power and let them fail and learn.
- Don't ignore small successes, programs, or organizations. In times of great systems change and creative destruction, small roots can become the next tall institutions.
- BE the change. Don't get stuck in one role, or be "separate." Get your hands dirty. The only way to truly learn is to do.
- Trust that new sources of funding and support will emerge. Capital follows ideas, success, and results.

Finally, and this may be the most important point of all – be easy on yourself and on others. Allow for imperfections and mistakes. You won't succeed at the web without experimenting, and the same is true for social innovation as a whole.

The web won't solve any of your problems on its own. But innovation, human ingenuity, collaborations, learning from failures, and encouraging visionary leadership at all levels will.

I believe we're in the midst of a massive systems change and we're still in the early stages. But doing things the same way we've always done them is not an option anymore, not is sitting still. If we don't, we may not have a world to hand to our grandchildren.

I salute you all and your commitment and passion for this work. And I wish you the best of luck with your failures and your successes. No less than the weight of our communities – indeed, the very soul of this fine country – is riding on us figuring this out.

Have a wonderful journey."

Jason Mogus is the CEO and Senior Internet Strategist at Communicopia. He can be reached at www.communicopia.net/who-we-are/our-team/jason-mogus.

Mr. Mogus' speaking notes, PowerPoint slides, and an audio file from his CCSD Briefing Notes session are available at www.ccsd.ca/events/2007/agm/mogus.htm.

Jordan's Principle:

A "child first" approach to jurisdictional disputes

Jordan was a young First Nations child born with complex medical needs. Because his family lacked access to the supports necessary to care for him at home on reserve, they made the difficult decision to place Jordan in the care of child welfare authorities. Jordan remained in hospital for the first two years of his life as his medical condition was stabilized.

Meanwhile, the First Nations community, the service agency, and the family worked together to find a medically trained foster home for Jordan and raise money to refit a van for his transportation. Shortly after his second birthday, doctors said Jordan was finally well enough to go to the foster home.

But wait.
Rather than celebrate, the federal and provincial governments then began arguing over which department would pay for Jordan's at-home care. The things they argued about ranged from higher-cost items like renovations to the home for a wheelchair ramp, to low-cost items like a special showerhead. The jurisdictional dispute lasted more than two years – and meanwhile, Jordan remained in the hospital.

The community tried to mediate a solution between the two levels of government.
When that failed, they took legal action. The jurisdictional dispute was finally settled – but unfortunately, not in time for Jordan. Sadly, he passed away in hospital before he ever got the opportunity to live in a family home.

Recent research[1] by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada indicates that jurisdictional disputes about the costs of caring for First Nations children are very prevalent. The vast majority were disputes between two federal government departments or between the federal and provincial/territorial government.

In honour of Jordan, organizations and individuals are calling on all governments to adopt a "child first principle" when resolving jurisdictional disputes involving the care of First Nations children. And to date, more than 450 supporters have done so.

Under Jordan's Principle, whenever a jurisdictional dispute arises – whether between government parties (provincial/territorial or federal) or between departments or ministries within the same government – concerning payment for services for a Status Indian child which are otherwise available to other Canadian children, the government or ministry/department of first contact must pay for the services without delay or disruption. The paying party can then refer the matter to a jurisdictional dispute mechanism. In this way, the needs of the child are met first, while still allowing for the jurisdictional dispute to be resolved.

"Jordan's family and community bestowed a great honour and responsibility on all of us by allowing the use of the term Jordan's principle to remind us that in the end, this is all about children – and they really do need to come first – all of the time."

For more information:

- To lend your support for the adoption of a child first principle by provincial, territorial and federal governments, go to www.fncfcs.com/more/jordansPrinciple.php.
- First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, Suite 1001, 75 Albert Street, Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7; Tel: (613) 230-5885; www.fncfcs.com

1 *Wen: de – We are Coming to the Light of Day*, 2005. Published by FNCFCS of Canada. http://www.fncfcs.com/docs/WendeReport.pdf

Canada's social development community

loses a champion

Agnes McCausland Benidickson (nee Richardson) died in March 2007, at her home in Ottawa.

Mrs. Benidickson was a seminal figure in the history of the CCSD. She was a long-serving member of the Council's Board of Governors, and she held the role of Board President from 1972 to 1975, helping to guide the organization through a very productive and rapidly evolving period.

In 1977, at the request of the Board, Mrs. Benidickson returned to the CCSD to serve as the interim executive officer. In the *Annual Report* that year, she wrote:

> "The role of the Council is and has been subject to change through the years. A constant factor has been that it has always given strong leadership in the social policy field. In this time of change, the CCSD's members, its Board of Governors, its staff and its next Executive Director must work together toward a better Canada for all. By our united effort we can and we must maintain the Council's place as a strong leader in the quest for human betterment."

In 1995, as part of celebrations of the Council's 75th Anniversary, Mrs. Benidickson was given a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her many years of dedication to and support of the Council's work. And from 1998 to 2001, she continued to actively support the CCSD by serving as Chair of a *Social Vision* campaign.

As her family noted in the obituary, "Agnes lived a life enriched by her family, her travels, her experiences and above all, by her service to community and country through a host of organizations which she founded, helped to lead and sustain through her tireless volunteer efforts. Her life and her example will continue to be celebrated by all who were touched by the commitment, insight, grace and generosity which were the hallmarks of her life."

In all her roles – at the CCSD and in many other organizations and associations across the country – she provided sound and compassionate leadership, while giving dignity and respect to the role of volunteers in society. We are profoundly grateful for the generous support and guidance that Agnes Benidickson provided to the Canadian community over many years.

Challenging the Status Quo

In October, a National Advisory Committee met for the first time to begin planning for the Canadian Social Development Forum. This CCSD initiated event is proposed for the spring/summer of 2009 in Calgary, Alberta, and will be held every two years thereafter.

"The Committee's role is nothing less than challenging the status quo around social development in Canada in ways that are practical, powerful and strategic," says CCSD President Marcel Lauzière. "It is not a simple task. Fortunately, a stellar group of social development experts and supporters have agreed to guide this process."

They include: **Wayne Helgason**, Executive Director of the Winnipeg Social Planning Council and CCSD Board Chair who is serving as the Committee Co-Chair; **Nicole Boily**, President of Conseil des Montréalaises; **Janet Davies**, Director of Policy, Regulation and Research at the Canadian Nurses Association; **Sid Frankel**, Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Manitoba and Board President for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada; **Christa Freiler**, Director of Research at the Canadian Education Association; **Edgar McLeod**, Chief of Police with the Cape Breton Regional Police Service and Past President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police; **LaVerna McMaster**, Chief Executive Officer of Siksika Resource Developments Ltd.; **Martin-Pierre Nombré**, CRÉ de Montréal and Forum sur le Développement social Montréal; **Sheila Regehr**, Executive Director of the National Council of Welfare; **Dick Stewart**, active volunteer and former General Manager for Social Services for the City of Ottawa; **John te Linde**, Manager of Policy and Planning for the City of Calgary; and, **Lana Wells**, Senior Director of Community Investments and Collaboration for the United Way of Calgary.

Social Development 2.0 – The Next Generation is the working title for this bilingual national initiative which will bring together a wide range of individuals and organizations that "do" social development. It builds on the ideas of Web 2.0, which utilize the Internet in more interactive and participatory ways – in this case, in an ongoing process of sharing and analyzing information and harnessing the creativity and knowledge of its users.

> "The Social Forum is a national event which will give the social development community a chance to meet and share face-to-face in a very exciting format."

And it is a process they are designing. At the first meeting, members of the Advisory Committee identified a common desire to "connect the dots" and go beyond mere problem-solving approaches. While acknowledging the challenges that lie ahead, Committee members were clear about the need for systemic change and for broadening the scope and reach of social development.

"The Social Forum is a national event which will give the social development community a chance to meet and share face-to-face in a very exciting format," says Lauzière. "But we recognize the critical need for all our networks to be working and sharing before and after Calgary."

CCSD is supporting ongoing projects and networks that will feed into the Forum's work.

THE WEILER AWARD
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Dick Weiler

The Award

The Weiler Award is presented annually to acknowledge and honour exceptional contributions to community and social development in Canada.

The Award recognises outstanding dedication by individuals, groups or organizations to social development/social justice causes through co-operative linkages and collaboration among individuals, groups, agencies and organizations.

The individual, group or organization honoured by this award is involved in social development as a catalyst for co-operation, social inclusiveness and creative response to social needs in both occupational and volunteer endeavours.

Dick Weiler (1942-1995)

Dick was a social advocate and humanitarian who devoted his life to making the world a better place. He helped lay the groundwork for social policies to promote national and community values in Canada.

Nominating a Candidate

Complete a nomination by:

- providing a description in 300 words or less of the candidate's achievements, the nature and impact of the activities involved and the audiences reached;
- preparing a one-page biography of the person or a short profile of the organization or group; and
- by obtaining three letters of support.

The nomination documents should be forwarded by March 15, 2008 to:

Weiler Award Trust
Attention: Ms. Gweneth Gowanlock
1001-44 Emmerson Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 2L8
Telephone: 613-728-1442
email: Tweetzero@aol.com

2008 Award

The recipient of the 2008 Weiler Award will be honoured at a banquet to be held during the Social Work National Conference 2008, co-sponsored by The Canadian Association of Social Workers and the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work and hosted by the Ontario Association of Social Workers. The banquet will be held on Saturday May 24, 2008 in Toronto, Ontario.

Literacy in the Workplace

The absence of a national strategy for workplace literacy training has resulted in a patchwork of approaches that has many Canadian employers looking for leadership and direction, according to a recently released series of reports available on the Canadian Council on Social Development's website (www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2007/literacy).

Literacy Programs in the Workplace: How to Increase Employer Support found that employers recognize workplaces as a key venue for adult literacy, but they don't know where to look for available tools, resources or funding.

"Although there is some literacy training going on in workplaces across the country," says report author, Lynette Plett, "without federal programs or incentives, too few employers have invested in workplace literacy training. And there is a real desire for the federal government to take on more of a leadership role."

According to results from the 2003 International Adult Literacy Survey, 45% of employed Canadians performed at lower levels than the minimum required for "coping with the demands of everyday life and work in a complex, advanced society."

"Given the number of recent cutbacks to organizations working in the area of literacy, there is nothing to suggest that these numbers have improved," says Katherine Scott, CCSD Vice President of Research. "Yet literacy training is a crucial element in maintaining a strong economy and competitive rates of productivity."

The report recommends that the federal government convene key partners in order to develop a coherent workplace literacy action plan. This would include stakeholders in provincial and territorial governments, employers, labour groups, and adult education and training providers. A similar recommendation was made in 2003 by the federal Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

In April 2006, the federal government created the Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program, which was described as a key part of the Government of Canada's efforts to support adult learning, literacy and essential skills, and would focus on improving capacity and results measurement. But a recent visit to the program's website indicates that no decisions on policy or programming have been made public. And a 2006 report by the Canadian Policy Research Network suggested that job-related training in Canada is lower than in other countries.

> **"What's even more troubling is that it looks like the more than 30% of workers who are struggling with literacy are not getting training. It is only common sense that partnering with employers could overcome this glaring gap in our industrial strategy."**

"That's worrisome enough on the competitiveness front for a country like Canada that aspires to strong performance," says Plett, a Professor in the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. "What's even more troubling is that it looks like the more than 30% of workers who are struggling with literacy

are not getting training. It is only common sense that partnering with employers could overcome this glaring gap in our industrial strategy."

Based on interviews with employers in Ontario, Nova Scotia and Quebec, the report outlines a series of services that could increase the number of workplaces that are willing to invest in literacy programs.

"It would make a lot of sense to have a central clearinghouse where prospective employers could find resources about programs available in their area," says Plett. "Some of it is as simple as providing a service like an 800 telephone number to refer them to appropriate workplace literacy providers and resources. There is also a need to support employers in developing a program for their workplace, and then helping with implemention and evaluation."

The Workplace Literacy series also includes working papers that provide:

- an overview of selected international programs;
- an overview of provincial and territorial policies;
- a review and bibliography of recent Canadian work on this issue.

Want to know more?

- The CCSD's Workplace Literacy series are available at www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2007/literacy
- The federal government's Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program (ALLESP) is at www.hrsdc.gc.ca//en/hip/lld/olt/ADULTLLESP.shtml
- The Conference Board of Canada's website has a helpful section on workplace literacy at www.conferenceboard.ca/workplaceliteracy

Why Small Cities Matter

Continued from page 17

Research conducted by Lorry-Ann Austin and Anna Johnson (two social work student researchers) indicates that not only are small cities distinct from big cities, their approaches to social development issues vary. In Williams Lake, B.C., for example, women's groups are "at the table" and active participants with the local government council in initiatives to improve women's safety. By contrast, women's groups and the local council in Kamloops have a more contentious relationship; as a result, highly punitive responses to the local sex trade are more evident there than innovative approaches that have been developed with community partners.

In small cities, the social challenges also seem to take on different forms. For instance, the problem of homeless youth is less visible in small cities because young people use different strategies to survive. They more often "couch surf" with friends and acquaintances, rather than sleep in parks, culverts, and shelters. This can make the issue largely "invisible" in small communities, and it illustrates the need for further research and discussion about the unique challenges in Canada's small cities.

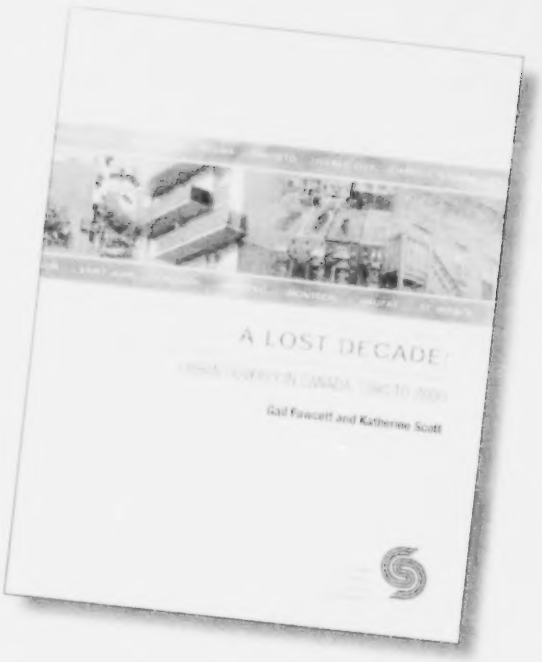
If political parties, researchers and governments are truly interested in the "urban agenda," it's time to distinguish small cities from big, because the small city today offers its own set of unique political dynamics and social challenges.

Dr. Terry Kading teaches political science and Dr. Christopher Walmsley teaches social work at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, B.C. They are members of a SSHRC-CURA Project that is "Mapping the Cultural Future of Small Cities." For more information about this project visit www.smallcities.ca.

Data on Urban Poverty

Poverty is not just about the numbers. It's the stark reality of everyday life for millions of Canadians.

The CCSD's Urban Poverty Project 2007 is a series of comprehensive analytical reports, resource tools, and data profiles that take a broad look at different aspects of urban poverty in Canada, using detailed data from Statistics Canada Censuses and other sources. Reports in this UPP series pay special attention to the status of certain population groups that are particularly vulnerable to poverty, while others examine the concentration of poverty in urban neighbourhoods.



"Poverty in Canada remains disproportionately an urban problem," says Gail Fawcett, lead researcher on the project. "And in terms of the fight against poverty, the 1990s was truly a lost decade."

In 2000, 80% of Canada's population lived in an urban area and 64.4% lived in one of 27 large urban areas or Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs); however, 69.7% of Canada's *poor* population lived in CMAs. In fact, the number of poor people living in CMAs grew at a faster rate over the decade than the total population in those areas.

"This kind of analysis is one tool to help monitor the impact of changing programs and policies on the lives of Canadians," says Katherine Scott, CCSD vice president of research. "When you look at the research, it becomes clear that economic up-turns alone cannot solve the problem of poverty. That message was reinforced by the knowledge and experiences of our local partners in cities such as Montréal and Calgary."

Resource tools developed under the Urban Poverty Project provide a wealth of data – from the national to the community level – and all are available for download from the CCSD's website (at www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2007upp/). Among the project resources are 111 community data profiles, poverty data tables for 106 geographies, three quick-reference fact sheets, and over 350 pages of analysis organized by different dimensions or themes.

Moving Forward

The next phase of CCSD's work on urban poverty issues is through its Community Social Data Strategy.

"Local governments and community agencies have now become key providers of social, economic and community development activities," says CCSD President Marcel Lauzière. "We saw that trend emerging in 2001. And we realized that with this shift of responsibilities, those local governments and community agencies would need access to data that more closely corresponded to the boundaries of their service areas."

To address that need, the Community Social Data Strategy (CSDS) was created. It is a pan-Canadian network of 15 local consortia, comprised of municipalities, social planning councils, health and social service agencies, school boards, police services and other community-based organizations that are working on the ground in social development.

"This kind of partnership promotes and enhances local access to relevant and detailed social data for organizations working to reduce poverty in their communities," says Lauzière. "It also supports activities that help leverage those resources and information into new, local-level poverty-reduction initiatives while keeping a steady eye on the federal and provincial policies and programs."

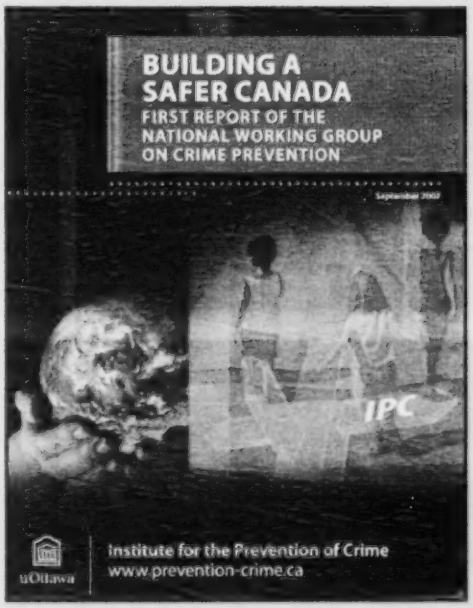
Want to know more?

- Resources from the Urban Poverty 2007 series can be downloaded from the CCSD's website at www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2007/upp/index.htm
- Also check out the poverty data tables at www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2007/upp/poverty_data_tables/index.htm

New Resource Available:

Building a Safer Canada is the first report of the National Working Group on Crime Prevention, a coalition which includes the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the University of Ottawa's Institute for the Prevention of Crime, and many voluntary sector organizations, including the CCSD. The report:

- provides an overview of crime and victimization in Canada, and of some of risk and protective factors associated with offending and victimization;
- draws attention to proven approaches and practices that help reduce or prevent crime;
- presents recommendations for establishing an evidence-based action plan.



The report can be downloaded from http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/ipc/eng/recomm_net_working_group.asp or hard copy obtained by e-mailing ipc@uottawa.ca .

Children and Youth:
Telling the Story of North America's Future

There were protests and criticism when Prime Minister Harper hosted Mexican President Felipe Calderon and U.S. President George W. Bush at an August 2007 meeting in Montebello, Quebec. Many people are concerned that the agenda of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) threatens national sovereignty.

That's certainly a question that merits discussion and debate.

But equally serious social development concerns have been almost totally ignored.

When it was created in 2005, the SPP committed the countries to "a trilateral effort to increase the security, prosperity, and quality of life of our citizens." However, its recent work reveals a glaring omission, one which raises questions about the group's ability to be strategic or visionary.

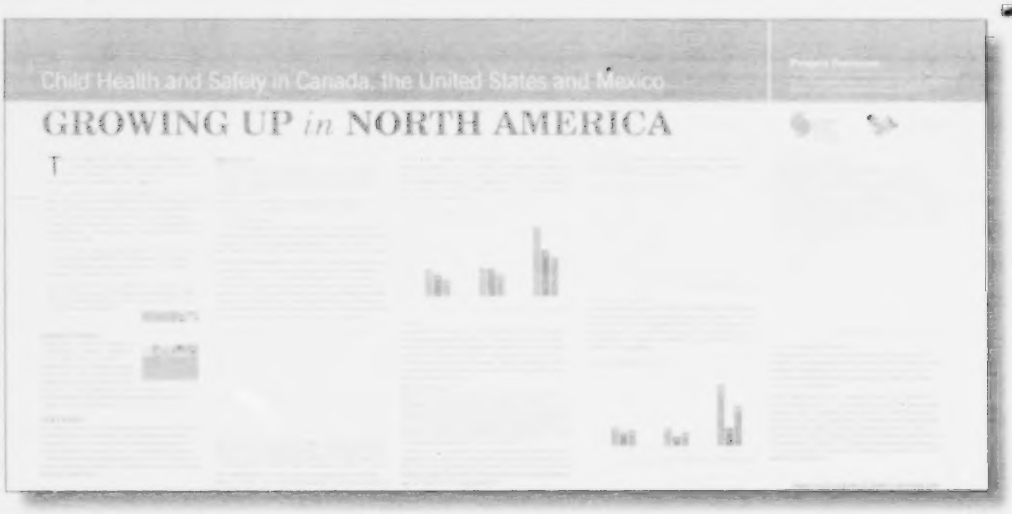
Children under the age of 18 make up one-quarter of all the people in North America. How they grow and develop is important not only to their parents, it is also of vital concern for the continuing strength of the three countries. But if our political leaders and officials intend to promote the "full potential" of our people – as they committed to do – how can they continue to ignore issues relevant to more than 120 million fellow citizens?

That oversight is of particular concern to the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD). Over the past three years, the CCSD has worked with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Population Research Bureau in the U.S. and with Red pos los Derechos de la Infancia in Mexico to develop tools and resources to assess how children in North American are actually doing in an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world.

Health Facts about children in North America:

- Canada, the U.S. and Mexico all report rates of childhood obesity of 26% to 30%.
- In only 20 years, asthma rates have increased fourfold in some regions of the continent.
- Health officials in all three countries have identified depression as a serious problem among youth, and all say that better data are needed to properly address the issue.
- Children in Mexico are more likely to die from leukemia than children in the United States or Canada.
- More than 21,000 North Americans aged 15 to 24 died as a result of unintentional injuries in 2000, many of which were preventable.

From *Child Health and Safety in Canada, the United States, and Mexico*, available on-line at www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2006/cina/trihealth.pdf.



The main goals of the project are to foster trinational research and collaboration, and to "raise the bar" on the rigorous use of monitoring and tracking the well-being of North American children for better-informed decision-making.

However, despite the size of this population group – and its obvious importance to the future strength of the continent – researchers from the three countries have found that comparable data on children's welfare is sorely lacking in too many areas. There are also large gaps in our knowledge about the well-being of certain groups – indigenous children and immigrant children, in particular – who are at heightened risk of social and economic marginalization.

To date, two reports in the *Growing Up in North America* series have been released. They examine the realities for young people in North America, including many issues of shared concern such as rising rates of obesity and respiratory problems among children in all three countries.

The research also reports on the paradoxes found.

In Canada and the United States, for example, a significant number of children live with hunger, despite rising obesity rates. In Mexico, growing numbers of children are becoming obese, but malnutrition and anaemia remain significant health problems.

An economic report will be available later this year, lead by CCSD researcher Katherine Scott. It shows that there are significant disparities – both within and among the countries – in children's access to the basic necessities of life and in the developmental opportunities needed to ensure that they are prepared for life in a global future. For example, almost half of Mexican families (44%) report not having enough money to buy food or purchase health care in a given year, compared to 15% of American families and 10% of Canadian families. Children in Canada and the United States are also more likely to have access to educational resources in their homes compared to children in Mexico. The unequal distribution of opportunities is just one feature of regional integration that is shaping the lives of children across North America.

Want to know more?

Reports in the Children in North America series can be downloaded from www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2006/cina/index.htm, and hard copies can be ordered, while quantities last, by contacting perkins@ccsd.ca.

Are you a Member of the CCSD?

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CCSD IS WORKING FOR YOU

The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) is one of Canada's key authoritative voices on social policy issues. Since 1920, the Council has been speaking up for the needs of Canadian children and families, the disadvantaged and the poor through research, consultations, public education and advocacy. Our books and research reports provide authoritative information and analysis, covering income security and poverty, employment and labour market issues, social policy, cultural diversity, crime prevention, and much more.

When you join the CCSD, you become part of a strong network of individuals and organizations who support the Council's mission to promote greater social and economic security for all Canadians.

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